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PERSONAL

7 February 1962

Dear John:

Your telephone report to me of your conversation with Ros Gilpatric on 5 February and a call which I received from Charyk on the same matter have made it apparent that I have not conveyed to you clearly my feeling with respect to my own future and have allowed a serious misunderstanding to arise. Accordingly, I feel it is essential that I set forth my position just as clearly as I can in writing so that your planning will no longer be made more difficult by any actual or apparent indecision on my part. I hope you will forgive me if in the interest of clarity I am rather blunt in what follows.

You have done me the great honor of urging that I remain in the Agency as Deputy Director (Research) and have outlined what you have in mind as the duties and responsibilities of this position. I have expressed to you in conversation my serious misgivings about the organizational validity of this proposal and my reluctance, as a matter of personal preference, to assume certain of the responsibilities that would be involved. In summary, the views I have expressed on the specific parts of the proposal are as follows:

First, I have questioned the wisdom of separating the Office of Scientific Intelligence and the National Photographic Interpretation Center from other offices under the Deputy Director (Intelligence) that are concerned with the analysis and production of finished intelligence.

Second, while I realize that the DCI may need a policy advisor on Elint and Comint matters, I have explained to you my personal distaste for this role. If I had a deep interest in these fields I would prefer some operational or managerial position.

Third, as I mentioned only briefly to you, I believe there are grave disadvantages in any attempt to split the Technical Services Division in such a way as to place research and development activities under a new Deputy and leave operational and support functions under the Deputy Director (Plans). Moreover, I am inclined to believe that progress in the exploitation of advanced techniques can

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-2-

be accelerated only by forcing a closer integration of developmental and operational activities which will be far easier to accomplish if they remain under common command. Accordingly, I am not clear what part, if any, of TSD should be placed under a new DD/R.

This leaves OXCART and the other reconnaissance projects, notably CORONA and SAMOS for consideration. I do agree, as I have said to you, that responsibility for these special projects could well be placed elsewhere than in the Clandestine Services and that they would benefit from more top management attention than I have been able to give them for the past several years. Thus the questions I have raised with respect to these activities do not concern organizational relationships within the Agency but rather the Agency's role in the reconnaissance business. With respect to the satellite systems, I will not bore you by restating the reasons for my feeling that no officer of this Agency can have a very major, effective, or useful role in the development of reconnaissance systems and the conduct of reconnaissance when these functions are largely or wholly performed within the Department of Defense. With respect to OXCART it is true that the Agency today can exercise fairly effective management and control of this enterprise. Its control is, however, threatened at this time by an inevitable and perhaps legitimate encroachment which springs from the growing interest of the Department of Defense in military as distinguished from reconnaissance applications of the OXCART vehicle.

Let us suppose, however, that the Agency retains its role as executive agent in charge of the whole OXCART program and that it continues to perform certain subsidiary functions with respect to CORONA and SAMOS under the terms of the presently outstanding agreement which established the National Reconnaissance Organization. What should be the position within the Agency of the officer in charge of its share of these activities? Reflecting my comments in earlier paragraphs, I believe he should be an Assistant to the DCI not a Deputy, that he should have under him the appropriate part of the Development Projects Divisions and possibly some portion of the Technical Services Division, and that in addition to his line responsibility for these activities he might have some vague staff responsibilities with respect to research and development done elsewhere in the Agency. This position, were you to establish it along these lines, would have approximately the same scope as the one I occupied in this Agency in 1958 before I was appointed DD/P. For me to accept it would mean a long step backward.

**SECRET**

**SECRET**

-3-

I am unhappily aware from the two telephone calls referred to at the beginning of this letter that in our conversation on the afternoon of 5 February, I led you to believe I would like to remain in the Agency in this position. What I intended to convey was my willingness to serve here (or in the Department of Defense) if I could play a leading role in the whole area of advanced reconnaissance systems. I was referring to a possibility, which as you are aware was discussed as far back as last August. I am satisfied, however, that under present circumstances this possibility no longer exists (and in any event I fear that if it had materialized it might have meant the loss to the Government of a much abler man).

If I did not have to make a prompt decision with respect to certain other positions (known to you) that have been offered to me, I would be happy to stay on at least for a time as an Assistant to you in charge of OXCART. Unhappily, the alternative opportunities will not wait and I do not feel that I can forgo them in favor of an essentially temporary job which, however fascinating, would be narrower in scope than I have become used to and completely remote from the larger issues of foreign policy. The prospect of returning in effect to my earlier position as the director of a special project would obviously be more attractive if I could see any real likelihood of a new expansion of opportunities lying ahead. Realistically, however, I must assume that the new appointments you will soon be making and (even more) the circumstances that have made an unwelcome change in my position advisable (for reasons I quite understand) will limit my scope within this Agency for some time to come.

To summarize: I sincerely doubt the wisdom of appointing a Deputy Director (Research) with the responsibilities you have in mind; the only duties of this position I would find challenging are the direction of OXCART and, if feasible, the supervision of some of the work of TSD; and these would not constitute a job of sufficient scope or promise to justify me in forgoing the alternative opportunities against which I must balance it.

I would be happy to discuss the whole matter with you further if you see anything to be gained thereby. I have the feeling, however, that we have covered the ground pretty thoroughly and that the time has come for a clean-cut decision which will free you to carry through the changes you plan in the Agency and allow it to settle down. Unless therefore you wish me to proceed otherwise I will send you my formal letter of resignation in a few days with the request that it be effective as soon as possible.

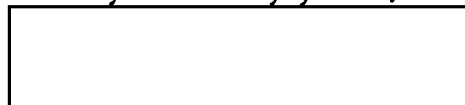
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-4-

I apologize for the length of this letter and its unavoidably negative tone. I hope my failure to make myself clear to you in our conversation on the 5th and what has undoubtedly appeared as my indecision over the last several weeks have not too greatly delayed your plans. Most particularly, I want to thank you for your thoughtfulness, your goodwill, and the confidence implied in your efforts to keep me in the Agency. I think you know how much I would have enjoyed working under you given other circumstances.

Very sincerely yours,

A rectangular box with a black border, used to redact the signature of Richard M. Bissell, jr.

Richard M. Bissell, jr.

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